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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1.   Due to communications filed 10/8/09, the following is a final office action. Claims

2-4, 9, 10, 29 have been amended. Claim 14 is cancelled. Claims 23-28 are

withdrawn. Claims 1-13, 15-22 and 29-38 are pending in this application and have been

examined on the merits. The previous rejection has been maintained. Claims 1-13, 15-

22 and 29-38 are rejected as follows.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as
> set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be
> patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious
> at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said
> subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention
> was made.

3.   Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13, and 29-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Bator et al, (US

2005/0192912 A1).

As per claim 1, Liechti teaches a postage evidencing meter comprising:

an authorization database having an entry, wherein the entry is associated with a user,

and the entry includes at least one parameter (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and "240";

col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44), wherein the parameter limits an ability of the

associated user to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5,

lines 5-44);

a processor operable to access said authorization database and limit the user's ability to

evidence postage using the meter in accordance with the parameter of the entry

associated with the user, (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5,

lines 5-9 and 22-65);

Liechti does not explicitly teach <u>storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is</u>

<u>associated with a user of the plurality of users.</u>

Bator et al teaches a metering system when the database records in Data Center 30

include <u>one or more meter</u> accounts licensed to the vendor where the vendor meter

account(s) is (are) used by customers to obtain postage payment evidencing as shown

in [0029]. Bator et al also shows that vendor obtains at least <u>one meter</u> license for an

online meter account where the meter account is licensed to process transactions for a

plurality of origin zip codes, where a customer initializes a personal account preferably

by completing a request for a meter license that heretofore must be approved before

customer could download postage, and the vendor "loans" the use of the meter to the

customer by processing the customer's requested transaction using the vendor meter

account as shown in [0032]. It therefore would have been obvious to one of ordinary

skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Liechti

and Bator et al to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated
with a user of the plurality of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the
applicant's invention to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is
associated with a user of the plurality of users for the advantage of providing a flexible
postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover,
it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage
system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is
associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Bator et al since the claimed
invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element
merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of
ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were
predictable.

As per claim 2, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of
claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum
postage amount that the associated user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence
postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

As per claim 3, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a period of time during which the associated user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 4, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes: a maximum postage amount that the associated user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 5, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the postage evidencing meter further comprising: a user interface (Liechti: Figure 2, "207" and "215"; col. 4, lines 4-10); a printer (Liechti: Figure 2, "250"; col. 4, lines 12-15); and a security module (Liechti: Figure 2, "250"; col. 4, lines 15-17).

 As per claim 7, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a communication link to a remote postage information system (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 5-9 - The Examiner interprets data center 15 to be the remote postage information system.).

As per claim 8, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising:

at least one postage evidencing meter comprising a processor, and a communication

module for providing a communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a

postage information system (Liechti: Figures 1-2; col. 3, lines 46-67 - The Examiner

interprets internal modem 205 to be the communication module and data center 15 to

be a postage information system.);

wherein the postage information system includes a database for storing at least one

postage usage parameter for a user of the meter (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and

"240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44),

wherein the parameter for the user limits an ability of the user associated with said

parameter to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines

5-44); and

wherein the processor is operable to access said database through said communication

module to limit the ability of a user to evidence postage in accordance with the

associated parameter (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5,

lines 5-9 and 22- 65).

Liechti does not teach separately storing information for each user of a plurality of

users.

Bator et al teaches a metering system when the database records in Data Center 30 include <u>one or more meter</u> accounts licensed to the vendor where the vendor meter account(s) is (are) used by customers to obtain postage payment evidencing as shown in [0029]. Bator et al also shows that vendor obtains at least <u>one meter</u> license for an online meter account where the meter account is licensed to process transactions for a plurality of origin zip codes, where a customer initializes a personal account preferably by completing a request for a meter license that heretofore must be approved before customer could download postage, and the vendor "loans" the use of the meter to the customer by processing the customer's requested transaction using the vendor meter account as shown in [0032]. It therefore would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Liechti and Bator et al to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Bator et al since the claimed

invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 9, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum postage amount that the associated user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

As per claim 10, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a period of time during which the associated user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 11, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 13, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the system of claim 8 as

described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link

(Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

As per claim 29, Liechti teaches a method for controlling postage usage comprising:

storing at least one postage usage parameter for a user in a postage usage database

(Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein

said postage usage parameters establish postage evidencing limits for the user (Liechti:

col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9);

receiving a request to evidence postage from a user of said plurality of users(Liechti:

col. 7, lines 2-4; col. 12, lines 22-24; col. 13, lines 21-24 - The creation of a user

account with postal funds is a request received to evidence postage from a selected

user.);

(a) determining, based on the requesting user's postage usage parameter, if sufficient

postage is available to fulfill the request for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-

27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of terminating the meter's ability to evidence

postage when the ascending register reaches the postage amount limit implies that

there is a step of determining whether there is sufficient postage to fulfill the request for

the selected user. For example, when the postage limit is reached, it is determined that

the user does not have sufficient postage available to fulfill a request.);

(b) determining if sufficient postage is available from an available postage balance of

said postage meter used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the requesting

user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of checking if the

ascending register reaches the postage amount limit includes the step of determining if

sufficient postage is available.);

evidencing a requested postage amount if said (a) determining is affirmative and if said

(b) determining is affirmative (Liechti: col. 2, lines 38-41; col. 7, lines 4-6);

recording postage usage for the requesting user in the postage usage database

(Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6; col. 12, lines 22-24); and

deducting an amount of postage used to fulfill the request for the requesting user from

the available postage balance (Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6).

Liechti does not teach separately storing information for each of a plurality of users of a

postage meter .

Bator et al teaches a metering system when the database records in Data Center 30

include one or more meter accounts licensed to the vendor where the vendor meter

account(s) is (are) used by customers to obtain postage payment evidencing as shown

in [0029]. Bator et al also shows that vendor obtains at least one meter license for an

online meter account where the meter account is licensed to process transactions for a

plurality of origin zip codes, where a customer initializes a personal account preferably

by completing a request for a meter license that heretofore must be approved before

customer could download postage, and the vendor "loans" the use of the meter to the

customer by processing the customer's requested transaction using the vendor meter

account as shown in [0032]. It therefore would have been obvious to one of ordinary

skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Liechti

and Bator et al to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated

with a user of the plurality of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is

associated with a user of the plurality of users for the advantage of providing a flexible

postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover,

it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage

system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is

associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Bator et al since the claimed

invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element

merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of

ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were

predictable.

As per claim 30, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the method of claim 29 as

described above. Liechti further teaches authenticating the requesting user (Liechti: col.

7, lines 34-39).

As per claim 31, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to configure parameters for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 6, lines 62-67; col. 7, lines 1-9); and modifying postage usage limits in the postage usage database (Liechti: column 7, lines 4-9).

As per claim 32, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the method of claim 31 as described above. Liechti further teaches the usage limit is a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 6-9).

As per claim 33, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to purchase postage for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24 - The Examiner interprets storing funds on the user's account to imply receiving a request to purchase postage.); and adding a purchased postage value to the postage usage database for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24).

As per claim 34, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least one of time and amount (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 35, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 36, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least one of time and amount (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 37, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

4.   Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Bator et al, (US 2005/0192912 A1), and further in view of Meadors et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0194154.

As per claim 6, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further the authorization database (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach a removable storage device.

Meadors teaches a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the postage evidencing meter of Liechti in view of Bator et al to have included a removable storage device as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system that is more versatile.

5.   Claims 12, 15-22, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Bator et al, (US

2005/0192912 A1), and further in view of Manduley, U.S. Publication No.

2004/0098354.

As per claim 12, Liechti in view of Bator et al teaches the system of claim 8 as

described above. Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach <u>the communication link is</u>

<u>a wireless link.</u>

Manduley teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph

0039). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Bator et al to have

included the <u>communication link is a wireless</u> link as taught by Manduley for the

advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one

another.

As per claim 15, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising:

at least two postage evidencing meters (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 3, lines 47-49), each meter

having a processor and a communication module for providing a communication link

(Liechti: Fig. 2, "201" and "205"; col. 3, lines 58-62), at least one postage evidencing

meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters storing at least one postage usage

parameter for a user, wherein said postage usage parameters define different postage

evidencing limits with respect to the user (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5- 9 and 22-65), wherein at least one postage usage parameter for the user is exchanged via the communication link (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9), and wherein the processor of the meter receiving said postage usage parameter controls an ability of the selected user associated with the postage usage parameter to evidence postage using the receiving meter in accordance with the received postage usage parameter (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65).

Liechti does not teach <u>storing separate information for each of a plurality of users.</u>

Bator et al teaches a metering system when the database records in Data Center 30 include <u>one or more meter</u> accounts licensed to the vendor where the vendor meter account(s) is (are) used by customers to obtain postage payment evidencing as shown in [0029]. Bator et al also shows that vendor obtains at least <u>one meter</u> license for an online meter account where the meter account is licensed to process transactions for a plurality of origin zip codes, where a customer initializes a personal account preferably by completing a request for a meter license that heretofore must be approved before customer could download postage, and the vendor "loans" the use of the meter to the customer by processing the customer's requested transaction using the vendor meter account as shown in [0032]. It therefore would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Liechti

and Bator et al to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated

with a user of the plurality of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is

associated with a user of the plurality of users for the advantage of providing a flexible

postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover,

it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage

system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is

associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Bator et al since the claimed

invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element

merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of

ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were

predictable.

Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach <u>a communication link that allows for the</u>
<u>exchange of information between at least two meters.</u> However, Bator et al does

disclose a <u>Communication</u> Server 32 that merges all incoming traffic from a plurality of

customers and routes it to a Function Server 34, which includes application software

that supports customer sign-on, postage dispensing and postal reporting as shown in

[0027].

Manduley teaches a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters (Manduley: paragraph 0039). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Bator et al to have included a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

As per claim 16, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26).

As per claim 17, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced by the selected user during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 18, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters

include: a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26); and a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 19, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach the communication link is a wireless link.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one another.

As per claim 20, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

As per claim 21, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches using cryptographic techniques (Liechti: column 8, lines 17-29). Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters (Manduley: paragraphs 0030-0031). It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

As per claim 22, Liechti in view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the exchange of postage usage parameters (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Bator et al does not teach an exchange between two meters is bi-directional.

Manduley further teaches an exchange between two meters is bi-directional (Manduley: paragraphs 0034-0037 - The Examiner notes, one meter can send funds to another

meter and vice versa.). It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill

in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in

view of Bator et al and further in view of Manduley to have included <u>an exchange

between two meters is bi-directional</u> as taught by Manduley for the advantage of

effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for

connecting to a remote data center.

As per claim 38, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at

least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

Response to Arguments

6.   Applicant's arguments filed 10/8/09 have been fully considered but they are not

persuasive.

        As per claims 1-7 and 34-35, applicant mainly argues that the system of *Liechti is

only* capable of limiting the usage of each meter in that system, and not limiting an

ability of the user associated with a parameter entry to evidence postage using the

meter, as recited by claim 1, and that *Liechti* imposes meter limits, not user limits.

However, col. 5, lines 27-32 of *Liechti* discloses that the imposition of the postage

amount limit is advantageous in a postpayment scheme, where the meter user is billed

for the reset amounts, as it controls the amount of credit extended to the user, and that

the postage amount limit is adjusted by data center 15 depending on the user's

creditworthiness.

Applicant also argues that the forgoing claim language requires the recited

plurality of entries be part of a postage evidencing meter. Regardless of whether *Bator*

stores multiple meter accounts at Data Center 30, because Data Center 30 is not a

postage evidencing meter, *Bator's* teachings do not disclose a "postage evidencing

meter ... having a plurality of entries" (emphasis added). However, [0029] of Bator

discloses: "In accordance with the present invention, virtual metering system 10

transitions to an instant virtual metering system when the database records in Data

Center 30 include one or more meter accounts licensed to the vendor. In the instant

virtual metering system 10, the vendor meter account(s) is (are) used by customers to

obtain postage payment evidencing without waiting for meter accounts to be assigned

to individual customers". In this case, Data Center is virtually part of the postage

evidencing meter, is included in postage evidencing meter processing and therefore

functions as part of the postage evidencing meter.

Applicant further argues that the individual meter accounts of Bator do not

comprise "a plurality of entries ... of the plurality of users ...." and that the information

file stored in Bator's meter account 50 corresponds to a single user, not a plurality of

users. However, in [0031], Bator shows that the meter account 50, which is assigned to

the postage meter vendor, dispenses postage payment evidence to a plurality of

customers 25...Data Center 30 may include a plurality of vendor meter accounts 50 for

the purpose of handling requests from a plurality of customers at one time.

Further, applicant argues that one of ordinary skill would not modify *Liechti's*

meter 101 such that it stored the information in *Bator* cited by the Office Action since

one of ordinary skill would not store the meter license of customer A inside the meter of

customer B because customer B's meter would have no legitimate use for such

information. However, the main purpose of combining the Liechti and Bator references

was not to show licensing aspects, however to show that postage evidencing meters

are capable of maintaining a plurality of accounts.

As per claims 8-11, 13, 29-33,and 36-37, applicant makes similar arguments as

claims 1-7 and 34-35, and claims 8-11, 13, 29-33,and 36-37are therefore still rejected

for the same reasons.

As per claims 12, 15-22, and 38, applicant makes similar arguments as claims 1-

7 and 34-35, and claims 12, 15-22, and 38 are therefore still rejected for the same

reasons.

Conclusion

7.   **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time

policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later

than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Akiba K Robinson-Boyce whose telephone number is

571-272-6734. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

•Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status

information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For

more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you

have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business

Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call

800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

   Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or

proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-

3900.

A. R. B.
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